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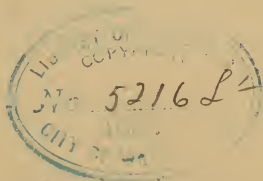
IN

HIS HEAVENWARD PROGRESS.

BY

JACOB HELFFENSTEIN, D. D.

Your life is hid with Christ in God. Col. 3:3.



AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

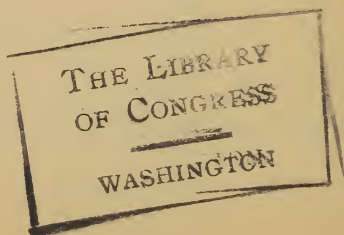
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There appear to have recently been awakened in many minds aspirations after higher attainments in the divine life. These aspirations should by no means be discouraged, but they require to be rightly directed; otherwise, instead of promoting the desired object, they may seriously mar the Christian character, and result in error and delusion. It is with a view to aid those who are longing for a closer walk with God, that the following pages have been written, with the earnest prayer that the blessing of God may accompany them.

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Christian Piety a New and Divine Life	PAGE 5
---	--------

CHAPTER II.

A more elevated Piety needed	12
------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

Is it Attainable?	16
-------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV.

A Fixed Purpose—Pressing toward the Mark	27
--	----

CHAPTER V.

Looking unto Jesus	37
--------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.

Morning Devotion—Beginning the Day with God	43
---	----

CHAPTER VII.

Continual Prayer	49
------------------------	----

CHAPTER VIII.

Watchfulness	56
--------------------	----

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER IX.

Spiritual Food	63
----------------------	----

CHAPTER X.

Realizing the Presence of God	69
-------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER XI.

Trials Sanctified	73
-------------------------	----

CHAPTER XII.

Living to the Lord	81
--------------------------	----

CHAPTER XIII.

The Daily Walk	90
----------------------	----

CHAPTER XIV.

Self-communion	97
----------------------	----

CHAPTER XV.

Conclusion	103
------------------	-----

ONWARD.

CHAPTER I.

CHRISTIAN PIETY A NEW AND DIVINE LIFE.

IT is not a mere assent to a creed, nor a routine of external observances, nor an excitement of the emotions, but truly and properly a *life*. "To be spiritually-minded is life." "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live." "Your life is hid with Christ in God."

The universe abounds with various forms and manifestations of life. Thus we speak of *vegetable* life. This has its peculiar laws of production and development, of decay and dissolution. Then we speak of *animal* life. This rises a grade higher. As the life of a tree is superior to the existence of a stone, so is the life of an animal superior to that of a tree. Then there is what may be denominated *intellectual* life, the life of a rational being, the existence and operation of mind more elevated than

either vegetable or animal life. But far above all is *spiritual* life—a life of godliness, the union of the soul with God, the great Source of all life.

This life, in fallen man, is not the product of nature, but of grace; not the result of our first birth, but of a second birth, by the agency of the Holy Spirit. In his unredeemed state man is spiritually dead—"dead in trespasses and sins." However noble may be the natural powers with which he is endowed, he is morally dead, alienated from God and the life that is of God. The unregenerate man is as insensible to spiritual things as a corpse is to natural things. A dead man is wholly unconscious of everything around him. To him the landscape has no beauty, the rose no fragrance, the sun no splendor, the sweetest melodies no charm.

Such is the state of fallen man spiritually. He has eyes, but he sees not; ears, but he hears not; a heart, but he feels not. He has no spiritual perception, no spiritual sympathies, no spiritual aspirations, no spiritual activity. He hears not the voice of God as it speaks to him from the Sacred Word, from the volume of creation, or the dispensations of providence; he discerns not the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus; his heart

beats with no pulsations of holy love ; his lips give no utterance to prayer or praise. Man is not simply in a *dying* condition, but *dead, dead*. The language of inspiration could not more strikingly express his entire estrangement from God and holiness. No matter what may be his mental powers ; no matter how much he may be distinguished for his integrity, kindness, and generosity, he is as utterly destitute of spiritual life as a dead man is of natural life. There are some who are lovely even in death. The cold and pallid countenance still retains its attractions, and it seems as if we must hear from the closed lips their accustomed accents ; but the fluttering heart has ceased to beat, and the inanimate form is committed to the dust as its proper abode. So is it often with man in his spiritual death. Dead as he is to all holy impulses and to all holy enjoyment, we may still discover in him much that is naturally good, upon which we cannot but look with admiration and delight.

The regenerated man enters upon a new world. He begins to have new views, new desires, new affections, new tastes. New objects meet his vision, new sounds strike his ear, new sensations thrill his bosom. The conscience is quickened, the understanding enlightened, the character of God ap-

pears in a new aspect, the plan of redemption is replete with wonders, the affections rise to things above, prayer becomes a delight, the burden of guilt is removed, the cloud of wrath is dispelled, and the future is irradiated with light and hope.

“Our quickened souls awake, and rise
From the long sleep of death;
On heavenly things we fix our eyes,
And praise employs our breath.”

The feelings of all new-born souls are not in all respects alike, though the change in all is substantially the same. Religious experience is greatly modified by a man's natural temperament and his apprehensions of divine truth. We need not wonder, where there is a sudden transition from pungent conviction to the assurance of pardoning mercy, that the joy of the convert should rise even to transport. Born to a new life, everything appears to him new. He has a new God and Saviour, new hopes and enjoyments. Even the face of nature appears new. The sun shines with unusual brilliancy, the fields are clothed with fresh verdure, the flowers have a sweeter perfume, the birds warble more charming melodies. All creation seems full of God, declaring his glory, and showing forth his handiwork. “Ye shall go out with joy, and be led

forth with peace : the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree, and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign, that shall not be cut off."

The grand principle of this new life is *faith*. "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." The natural man is controlled by natural objects; the spiritual man by spiritual objects. The one is supremely influenced by things seen and temporal; the other by things unseen and eternal.

Where there is life we look for *motion*. Spiritual life is operative, as well as spontaneous and free. So far from paralyzing the mind, it excites it to vigorous and healthy activity. If the Christian is "dead to sin," he is "alive to God." He serves God, not from compulsion, but from choice. His faith is a working faith; his hope a "lively hope;" his love a constraining love.

This may be truly designated as a *divine* life. It comes from God and it leads to God. Feeble as it may be in its commencement, it is ever acquiring increased vigor, and advancing to its ultimate ma-

turity. Natural life may become extinct, but spiritual life will be perpetuated in endless and progressive activity.

What a different thing is religion from what many suppose it to be. How many mistake the mere shadow for the substance, the form for the power of godliness. How many, who even have "a name to live," are still dead in sin. No external reformation, no pangs of conviction, no flashes of joy, no forms of devotion, can afford a substitute for this interior, spiritual life. Not until we are created anew in Christ Jesus do we perform any works morally good and acceptable to God. All our previous works are but "dead works," being destitute of all vitality. Religion does not consist in the cultivation of a principle of moral goodness already existing, but in the implantation of a new principle—the exercise of affections entirely new—a change deep and radical. "Old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new."

Correctly as this new and divine life may be described by the pen or the lip, it can be fully known by those only who are its happy subjects. It is not a mere matter of theory or speculation, but of heartfelt experience. "We have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the

things that are freely given to us of God." It is truly designated as a *hidden* life, hidden not merely from the world, but to a great extent even from the believer. We may discover its external manifestations, and feel its sacred influence, but the secret operations of the Holy Spirit, in its production, its perpetuation, and its consummation, are beyond the comprehension of the human mind.

CHAPTER II.

A MORE ELEVATED PIETY NEEDED.

A DISTINGUISHED writer has remarked, "The external prosperity of the church was never greater nor the spiritual power less than at this very day."

Though we may not indorse this sentiment, is it not obvious that the tone of piety in the church is very far from what it ought to be and what it will be? Never, perhaps, has there been a period when there has been a wider extension of true piety than at the present day; and yet while Zion's cords are lengthened, is it not questionable whether her stakes are proportionally strengthened? While we have gained in quantity, may we not have lost in quality? With all the activity and enterprise that distinguish the church of our age, is there not still a lamentable want of that spirituality and purity which should characterize the followers of the immaculate Redeemer?

The Rev. John Angell James has forcibly remarked, "Amid much that is cheering, there is, on the other hand, much that is discouraging and distressing to the more pious observer. We behold a

strange combination of zeal and worldly-mindedness ; great activity for the extension of religion in the earth, united with lamentable indifference to the state of religion in the soul ; in short, apparent vigor in the extremities, with a growing torpor at the heart. Multitudes are substituting zeal for piety, liberality for mortification, and a social for a personal religion. No careful reader of the New Testament, and observer of the present state of the church, can fail to be convinced, one should think, that what is now wanting is a high spirituality."

In comparing the piety of the present with the past, we are very liable to form an erroneous judgment. Each age has its characteristics, its peculiar excellences, and its defects ; and while we repudiate the latter, we may unduly magnify the former. Christianity is essentially the same at all times, but it may vary in its manifestations. Certain Christian graces may be more fully developed at one period than at another, just as certain doctrinal truths may be presented with more or less prominence. Looking at the matter impartially, we are inclined to think that while the church of the present is making rapid progress, it may not always be in the right direction, or by the most unexceptionable means.

There are two grand defects in the piety of many professed Christians—the want of *depth* and of *stability*—the latter the natural result of the former. Their feelings and conduct are subject to continual variations. Their course resembles far more the blazing meteor whose brilliancy astonishes us for a moment, than “the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” If they are Christians at all, they are certainly very unstable ones. If their religious life commenced with becoming fervor, how quickly was this followed by a marked declension. The religion of vast numbers who bear the Christian name seems to form its character entirely by times, places, and circumstances. There is a constant tendency in the human heart to wander from God and duty. Even the most advanced Christian cannot but feel and deplore this tendency. Who has not had occasion to utter the complaint,

“Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love.”

Alas for our leanness, our leanness! How feeble our spiritual pulse, how languid our affections, how weak our faith, how lifeless our prayers, how inefficient our efforts, how earthly our attachments, how wavering our steps, how dim our prospects for

the future. Where are the professed Christians who are "following hard after God," panting for communion with him "as the hart panteth after the water-brooks," "crucified to the world and the world to them," professing the abiding witness of the Spirit and rejoicing in hope of future glory, daily denying themselves, taking up the cross and following their divine Exemplar and Redeemer? Such Christians, thank God, there are, but how comparatively small the number. How doubtful the piety of many both to themselves and to the world. At what a "poor, dying rate" are multitudes living who profess to have entered upon the new life and to have been made heirs of an eternal inheritance.

It becomes then a most serious question, How shall a more elevated and consistent piety be attained? In other words, how shall we live in constant communion with God, and enjoy an uninterrupted sense of his favor? This question the writer proposes in this volume to answer, trusting that with the Divine blessing it may be the means of establishing the wavering, and exciting in the faithful believer aspirations after still higher attainments in personal holiness, increased health and vigor in the Christian life.

CHAPTER III.

IS IT ATTAINABLE?

IN the first place, there must be a full persuasion that a higher standard of piety is *attainable*. Without this persuasion there can be no motive to seek it. Hope is the mainspring of action. In all the pursuits of life it is the expectation of ultimate success that nerves the mind with energy and incites to perseverance. The sentiment so prevalent, that while we are encumbered with flesh and blood, and surrounded with so many unfavorable influences, a high degree of spirituality is unattainable, has had a most paralyzing influence. Thousands have thus been led to be too well contented with their low attainments, and even to justify them by the plea of necessity.

But must we ever live at this distance from God? Is there no higher, holier, happier state attainable on earth than that which is commonly reached by the disciples of Jesus? Is it necessary that their piety should be so superficial, above all that it should be subject to such continual fluctuation? Is it necessary that they should one day be

hoping, the next desponding; one day aspiring after heaven, the next cleaving to the earth; one day walking in the light of God's countenance, the next walking in darkness; one day singing the Lord's song in the house of their pilgrimage, the next suspending their harps on the willows in melancholy silence; one day all aglow with zeal in the cause of Christ, the next betraying the most criminal indifference? Admitting that earth is not heaven, is there not something here akin to it, something that approximates towards it? "Suppose the absolute, sinless rest of the blessed is not to be attained here, does it follow that there is nothing that is? Though heaven itself does not lie on this side of the river of death, is there not a land of Beulah that does? and have not multitudes, who once were scarce able to keep awake on the enchanted ground, found themselves renewed as with youthful vigor when they entered this balmy region?"

"Now," says Bunyan, "I saw in my dream that by this time the Pilgrims were got over the Enchanted Ground, and entering into the country of Beulah, whose air was very sweet and pleasant, the way lying directly through it, they solaced themselves there for a season. Yea, here they heard

continually the singing of birds, and saw every day the flowers appear in the earth, and heard the voice of the turtle in the land. In this country the sun shineth night and day. Here they were within sight of the city they were going to ; also here met them some of the inhabitants thereof ; for in this land the Shining Ones commonly walked, because it was on the borders of heaven. In this land also the contract between the Bride and the Bridegroom was renewed ; yea, here, ‘as the Bridegroom rejoiceth over the Bride, so did their God rejoice over them.’”

Bunyan ascribes this happy state to his pilgrims as they drew near the celestial city. It is not uncommon for the aged Christian who has faithfully served God and his generation, especially for the dying Christian, to be favored with such visions of future glory, and such manifestations of divine love that heaven seems to have been begun on earth. But why should we limit this blessedness to the close of life ? Why may there not be at an earlier period a similar experience, an experience free from all painful doubts and fears, and the enjoyment of the full assurance of final salvation, a “peace that flows like a river,” a “joy unspeakable and full of glory” ?

“The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets,
Before we reach the heavenly fields,
Or walk the golden streets.”

The ecstatic feelings experienced by the believer from the clear apprehension and assurance of future felicity may not be a permanent, but only a transient experience, as was the case with the pilgrims, for it is said that in the country of Beulah “they solaced themselves for a season,” having not yet reached their home, nor passed through all their trials. But if such ravishing visions of the glory of heaven may not be permanent, they may be followed by what may be of still higher value—more entire submission to the Divine will, more abstraction from the world, more unreserved consecration, and more patient waiting for the Master’s summons.

There was a time in the religious life of Mrs. Edwards, the wife of President Edwards, when, deeply humbled on account of her shortcomings, she gave herself to Christ with renewed consecration; and from that period, it is said, she enjoyed a sweet peace and serenity of soul, without a cloud to interrupt it, a constant rejoicing in God and assurance of his favor, entire resignation to his will

with respect to health or sickness, ease or pain, life or death ; sensible and immediate answers to prayer ; realizing constantly the presence of God with her, and doing everything to his honor and glory.

Dr. Payson, after passing through some severe mental conflicts, was favored with such gracious manifestations as he had never before enjoyed. " Oh, what a Master," says he, " do I serve. I have known nothing, felt nothing all my days, even in comparison with what I now see in him. Never was preaching such sweet work as it is now. Never did the world seem such a nothing ; never did heaven appear so near, so sweet, and so overwhelmingly glorious ! God's *promises* appear so strong, so solid, so real, so substantial, more so than the rocks and everlasting hills. And his *perfections*—what shall I say of them ? When I think of one, I wish to dwell upon it for ever. But another, and another, equally glorious, claim a share of admiration ; and when I begin to praise, I wish never to cease, but have it the commencement of that song which shall never end."

The Rev. John Flavel, an eminent Puritan writer, while on a journey to preach in a certain place, had such views of the divine glory and of heaven that he became entirely oblivious to surrounding

objects. In this ecstatic state of mind he continued during the whole night. Sleep forsook him, but he said it was one of the most refreshing nights he ever spent. This he afterwards used to call "one of the days of heaven."

"I look for no heaven," said the seraphic Baxter, "but the perfection of divine life, light, and love, in endless glory with Christ and his saints; and *this he has already begun in me.*"

And what saith the apostle? "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit"—the sure pledge and foretaste of the glory yet to be revealed.

It may be urged that these are individual and extraordinary cases; but why should not such consecration to God and such communion with him be the common attainment of Christians? What others have attained we may also attain, and when the church arrives at her millennial glory, we are told that "he that is feeble shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before him."

Is there not "the full corn in the ear" as well as "the blade"? "the perfect day" as well as the first dawn? Are there not fathers and mothers in

Christ as well as babes? Are we not required to be "in the fear of the Lord all the day long," to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord," to be "always zealously affected with a good thing," to "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks"? Did not the apostle pray that his Ephesian brethren might be "filled with all the fulness of God," and assure them that God was able to do for them exceeding abundantly above all they could ask or think?

We engage here in no discussion respecting what is termed "Christian perfection," "entire sanctification," or "the higher Christian life." It is enough for us to know that there are heights and depths, lengths and breadths in the redeeming love of Christ, which none of us have yet reached, but which may yet be realized in our happy experience. Why should we ever remain in the vestibule of Christianity, while within the sacred temple are such wonders yet to be disclosed? Why this unsteady walk, this continual variation in our religious affections? Surely there is enough in the great truths of the gospel to awaken within us the deepest interest, and prompt to the most unwavering fidelity. What mighty motives are continually pressing upon us to persevering diligence—the glory of the

infinite God, the dying love of the Saviour, the sacrifice of the cross, the value and destiny of the soul, a world in sin and death, the judgment of the great day, the transcendent bliss of heaven, the unutterable woes of perdition. It seems scarcely possible that any one who seriously admits these momentous truths can decline in his religious fervor a single moment. Dwelling as we do in tabernacles of clay, and subject as we are to bodily infirmities that often restrain the free exercise of the mind, the spirit may be willing while the flesh is weak. But while our feelings may change every hour of the day, our purpose to serve and glorify God may be continually acquiring increased vigor.

There can be no question that the piety of Christians may become not only more profound and ardent, but also more uniform and stable, a piety whose influence will be felt in every period of life, and will be carried through every hour and moment of the day. Such piety can be found only in connection with inward purity. Action must be the result of principle. It is in vain to prescribe rules for a holy life, unless there exists a holy heart. Religion, to send forth its fertilizing and refreshing streams over our every-day life, must have its source in a full and overflowing fountain.

It may be important here to remark : there is a tendency in some minds to connect with the profession of eminent piety, special divine manifestations as an inseparable accompaniment. With such manifestations we know that God has occasionally favored his people, imparting to them clearer discoveries of divine truth, filling their hearts with transporting joy, and affording them in a high degree the foretaste of celestial bliss. Many Christians, however, who have made great spiritual progress, know nothing of such remarkable experience, and yet live in daily communion with God, and the Spirit's witness to their adoption. Indeed it would scarcely be possible in our present imperfect state of existence, to endure those manifestations of the divine presence and glory which some distinguished saints have enjoyed. Our physical nature would be overpowered, were they often repeated, or were they continued any length of time, as may be clearly seen in the case of the Rev. John Flavel, already referred to.

The Rev. Wm. Tennent, while pastor of the Presbyterian church near Freehold, New Jersey, was accustomed during the interval between the two services on the Sabbath, to retire to a grove for meditation and prayer. On one of these occasions

he had such views of God and heaven, that he was hardly able, from exhaustion, to reach the church, and when he entered he had to be assisted into the pulpit, preaching then with extraordinary power. Glorious as was this manifestation, had it been his every-day experience, life would soon have become extinct, and his labors on earth have closed. Such manifestations are made only on special occasions and for special purposes. Our advancement in holiness, therefore, is not to be determined by them, and if withheld, and our emotions should not always be raised to the highest intensity, we may still live a life of faith and consecration to God, having continually the testimony that we please him. Feeling in religion is not to be discarded, but a surer test of piety is faith—faith exercised even under physical and mental depression. Nor should we measure the degree of our piety by the degree of our assurance, but by daily walking humbly with God.

There is another mistake which some Christians make, especially those of the mystic school. As religion consists in the harmony of man's will with the will of God, they sometimes speak as if their will were so absorbed in the divine will as to be entirely annihilated, having no choice between events prosperous or adverse, joyous or sorrowful.

Such indifference seems hardly possible, being utterly inconsistent with the laws of the human mind, and is nowhere required as an evidence of true piety. Unquestionably there should in all cases be the most cordial acquiescence in the will of God, as revealed in his word and indicated in his providence. This, however, is entirely consistent with the keenest sensibility to suffering, and with earnest prayer for its removal. The *human nature* of Christ shrank from suffering, and he plead that the bitter cup might pass away from him, adding, however, with unqualified submission, "nevertheless not my will, but thine be done."

The truly pious, yet in some respects visionary lady, Madam Guyon, appears at times to have carried the idea of self-annihilation or passive suffering, to an unscriptural extreme, assuming burdens which she could well have avoided, as a salutary discipline, and a means of spiritual advancement. When God in his providence lays upon us crosses, let us bear them with submission; but we are hardly required to make crosses for ourselves, and regard it as an evidence of extraordinary piety that we bear them so patiently.

CHAPTER IV.

*A FIXED PURPOSE—PRESSING TOWARDS
THE MARK.*

“O God, my heart is fixed.” With the full persuasion that eminent and habitual piety is attainable, it must now be our firm resolve, in dependence upon divine grace, to possess it. Salvation in all its rich blessings is the gift of God, but it is bestowed only on those who earnestly seek it. The influence of the Holy Spirit, far from superseding our personal agency, is designed rather to call it into requisition. No sinner is saved unless he strives to enter into the strait gate, and no Christian can advance in holiness without the fixed determination to do so. It will not do to sit down in a state of mere passivity, and wait for the blessing to come to us. With what insatiable longings did the psalmist pant after communion with God. *“As the hart panteth after the water-brooks; so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and*

thirsty land, where no water is—my soul followeth hard after thee.”

“This one thing,” said Paul, “I do: forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

This was the all-absorbing desire and aim of the great apostle—full salvation in Christ. Nothing short of this could satisfy his regenerated nature. Forgetting the past, neither dispirited by its failures, nor unduly elated by its success, his constant aspiration, his most strenuous effort was to attain to the highest standard of piety on earth, and to the unsullied bliss of heaven. From the pursuit of this object nothing could divert him, no persecutions, no trials, no sense of his own weakness and unworthiness. Like the Grecian racer, he strained every nerve, exerted every power to reach the goal, to obtain complete redemption. When he uttered these words he had been a Christian and a minister about thirty years. He had made great advancement in the divine life, and had been signally blessed in his labors, but the past was, as it were, forgotten in the bright prospects of the future. His soul was fired with holy ambition to possess

the perfect image of God and the unfading crown of righteousness. It was not wealth, not fame, not anything that this fleeting world can afford, on which his heart was set, but the *mark*, the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus.

If we consult the memoirs of eminently pious persons, we shall find that their attainments were reached by the same fixed and unalterable purpose. That devout lady Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe, author of "Devout Exercises" (a work we could wish were more generally read), in speaking of her intense longings after holiness, says, "If God should bid me form a wish and take whatever in heaven or earth I had to ask, it should not be the wealth of the world, nor the crowns of princes, no, nor yet the wreaths of martyrs, nor thrones of archangels; my first request is to be made holy: this is my highest concern."

"To be an eminent Christian," says James Brainerd Taylor, "will cost much." He truly found it to be so in his own experience. After receiving a new baptism of the Spirit, constituting a new era in his religious life, he writes, "I had an increasing desire that the Lord would visit me, and fill my soul with the Holy Ghost. My cry to him was, 'Seal me for ever thine.' My earnest desire then

was, as it had been ever since I professed religion six years before, that all love of the world might be destroyed, all selfishness extirpated, pride banished, unbelief removed, all idols dethroned, everything hostile to holiness and opposed to the divine will crucified ; that holiness to the Lord might be engraven on my heart, and evermore characterize my conversation. At this very juncture I was delightfully conscious of giving up all to God. I was enabled in my heart to say, ' Here, Lord, take me, take my whole soul, and seal me thine, thine now, and thine for ever ! ' Then there ensued such emotions as I never before experienced. All was calm, tranquil, silent, solemn, and a heaven of love pervaded my whole soul. I had a witness of God's love to me, and of mine to him. I was dissolved in tears of love and gratitude to our blessed Lord. He came as king, and took full possession of my heart. Since that blessed season I have enjoyed times of refreshment in which I have obtained nearer access to God. Oh the peace which I have had, and joy in the Holy Ghost ! It has flowed as a river ; I have been happy in my Lord ; I have exulted in the God of my salvation."

Why should not the whole church be in possession of such piety ? What the grace of God has

done for some, it can do for all. We are not straitened in him, only in ourselves.

It may be that the reader has often repeated the lines,

“Could I but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o’er!”

Be not satisfied with the mere wish. Rise and ascend, and stop not until you reach the summit, and behold the goodly land spread before you, “dressed in living green.” “Be not faithless but believing.” Do obstacles obstruct your progress? faith can overcome them all. Granting that we live in an age of worldliness, “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” Granting that the tone of piety in the church is low; must it always remain so? Granting that absolute sinless perfection is not attained on earth; is there no approach towards it?

The question may here be asked: Is the possession of eminent piety a sudden or a gradual attainment? It may be either. There are undoubtedly instances, as in the experience of Mrs. Edwards, J. B. Taylor, and others already referred to, in which believers, after deep humiliation, and renewed consecration to God, have at once reached

a standard of piety unknown to them before ; still, however, following on to know the Lord more fully, daily confessing their short-comings and imploring forgiveness through the blood of atonement. It is thus possible for a Christian, by a more entire surrender of himself to God and a more vigorous exercise of faith, to reach a point in a day which he had in vain sought to reach for years.

The work of holiness, however, is represented in the Scriptures as a *gradual process*. "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." "Giving all diligence add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge," etc. Regeneration is an instantaneous change ; justification an instantaneous act ; sanctification a gradual work. This is well expressed in the "Shorter Catechism of the Presbyterian Church :—" "Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness."

If the spiritual progress of the believer may at times be slow, it is sure ; if attended with painful conflicts, it is followed by glorious triumphs. We

certainly ought to expect an immediate answer to our prayers for increased sanctification ; but if the blessing does not come at once, let it call forth only greater importunity. The insatiable desires of the Christian after holiness will be satisfied. God who has created them will not deny them. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

It may be important here to remark, that whatever progress may be made in the divine life in every stage of that life, its essential elements are the same, the same in the babe as in the father in Christ, the difference being only one of degree. In its incipency, as well as in its more advanced state, this life has its appropriate laws, its peculiar characteristics, by which it is clearly distinguished from the life of nature. Like all life it is progressive. If its development is not in all cases equally rapid, still there is growth, "Ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall." Mal. 4:2.

All the Christian graces are capable of increase. While this increase may in some instances be slow, and hardly perceptible, in others there may speedily be acquired a spiritual vigor that may seem like a second conversion, or an entirely new life, while in its nature or principles it is the same life previ-

ously existing, only carried forward to a higher degree of maturity.

Have not the terms frequently employed in reference to this subject tended to produce misapprehension and confusion? such, for example, as the phrase "The higher life." If by this is simply meant higher attainments in holiness, it expresses only what all Christians admit to be attainable; but the language seems rather to convey the idea of a *new* life, a life entirely distinct from the life essential to all true piety. So too the term sanctification. This is often spoken of as a *new* experience, or as having no immediate and necessary connection with justification or regeneration; whereas in all cases sanctification is inseparable both from regeneration and justification. The feeblest Christian, while he is fully justified, is also in a measure sanctified. "Sanctified in Christ Jesus," is characteristic of all the people of God. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

"*Entire sanctification*" and "*perfection*" are liable to the same misconstruction; for however elevated may be our piety, the process of sanctification is still going forward, and will be completed

only when the church is presented before the throne "not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing."

One of the most distinguished advocates of "Entire sanctification," who himself professes to have reached that state, remarks: "Since then I have passed through many fiery trials and sore temptations, have frequently been unfaithful, and through want of watchfulness have been necessitated to come again and again to the cleansing blood; yet I have never had any reason to doubt that when the Holy Ghost came to my heart as a witnessing Spirit he came as a purifying Spirit also." This surely is not entire sanctification. Is not unfaithfulness sin?

The Rev. John Wesley, of whose piety and apostolic spirit we can hardly speak in too exalted terms, defines Christian perfection to be "the loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words and actions are governed by pure love." And yet while he claims that the attainment of such perfection is the present privilege of all believers, he admits:

"1. Every one may mistake as long as he lives.

“2. A mistake in opinion may occasion a mistake in practice.

“3. Every such mistake is a transgression of the perfect law. Therefore,

“4. Every such mistake, were it not for the blood of atonement would expose to eternal damnation.

“5. It follows that the most perfect have continual need of the merits of Christ, even for their actual transgressions, and may say for themselves, as well as for their brethren, ‘Forgive us our trespasses.’”

This perfection has been denominated evangelical in distinction from legal perfection. But is not the law of God the eternal standard of right, and can there be perfect holiness short of perfect conformity to that law? Has not much of the perplexity in which this subject has been involved resulted from the want of definiteness, and from the different meanings attached to words? In passing judgment on the sentiments and piety of our Christian brethren, it should ever be in the spirit of charity and kindness. There is often an apparent difference of sentiment where there is none in reality.

CHAPTER V.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

IN this brief and comprehensive sentence is unfolded the whole mystery of sanctification. "*Looking unto Jesus*" constitutes the Christian's daily exercise and his daily strength. As religion begins, so it is carried forward in its progressive stages, until it terminates in celestial glory. No sooner is the eye of faith directed to a crucified Redeemer than the sinner receives a free, full, and eternal pardon ; and as it is by faith in Christ he is justified, so it is by faith he is sanctified. The just are said to *live* by faith, to *stand* by faith, to *walk* by faith. The heart is purified by faith, the world is overcome by faith, the fiery darts of the wicked are quenched by faith. It is a serious mistake to suppose that, while we are justified by faith, we are sanctified by works. It is this legal spirit, this dependence upon our own doings, that prevents many an anxious inquirer from obtaining solid peace, and that also hinders many a Christian from enjoying fully the freedom wherewith Christ makes his people free. Rom. 9 : 31, 32. In the religion of the gospel, Christ

is all in all—"our wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." "My *beginning, progress, and ending,*" says Professor Francke of Germany, "is by faith in Jesus Christ. When I feel my utter inability, and acknowledge that I can do nothing of myself, and cast myself upon his mercy alone, I feel a new power of communication to my soul. I do not seek to be justified in one way and sanctified in another."

In vain are all our efforts to get rid of sin, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness, until deeply conscious of our own weakness, and renouncing all self-dependence, we look to Jesus as the source of all spiritual life and strength. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing."

The eminent piety of the apostle Paul was the result of his abiding union to Christ—"Christ in him the hope of glory." "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who

loved me, and gave himself for me." "True holiness flourishes only in the soil enriched by the blood of Christ." It is to the cross we are indebted for our deliverance, not only from the penalty of sin, but also from its power and dominion. It is to the cross we are indebted for the gift of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to renew the heart, and conform it to the image of God. It is to the cross we are indebted for the only effectual motives to holiness and devotion to the service of God. "Ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." Christian love, fortitude, patience, and self-denial can be learned only in view of a Saviour's life and death. "Where does penitence weep, but at the cross? Where is the flesh humbled, and pride debased, but at the cross? Where, if not at the cross, does unwearied diligence in well-doing find its impulse and encouragement? Where else does the sinner hold intercourse with God? Where is Christian vigilance unsleeping, if not at the cross? Where does faith work by love, or hope purify, or holy fear alarm, or holy promise comfort, or the meekness of wisdom rectify the inequalities of the natural temperament, but at the cross?"

Five persons once engaged in conversation as

to the most effectual means to mortify sin. One suggested meditation on *death*; the second, on the *judgment*; the third, on the *joys of heaven*; the fourth, on the *torments of hell*; the fifth, on the *sufferings of Christ*. But without the influence derived from the last, the other motives, however impressive, would prove utterly powerless. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Every motive to holiness centres in the cross, and derives from it its highest force. Nowhere else have we such an exhibition of the righteousness of the divine law, the holiness of the divine character, the evil nature of sin, the fearful doom of the sinner, and the boundless love of God; and nowhere, consequently, such powerful persuasives to obedience. It is only by "the truth as it is in Jesus," received by faith, and applied by the Holy Spirit, that sin is dethroned, and the heart cleansed from its defilement.

The gospel provides the only remedy for sin, for deliverance both from its penalty and its power. The law may convict, but it cannot convert; it may condemn, but it cannot pardon; it may stir up the corruption of the human heart, but it cannot sub-

due it. "But—what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh—God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." Rom. 8 : 3, 4.

Spiritual life can be sustained only by daily "*looking unto Jesus.*" The tragic scene of the Saviour's death, as well as his immaculate life, must be kept in constant remembrance. Our meditations on this subject must not be confined to the Sabbath or to communion occasions, but must become an habitual exercise, by our "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." Every moment we need the merit of his blood, and every moment should we look to him for fresh supplies of grace.

" My dying Saviour and my God,
Fountain for guilt and sin,
Sprinkle me ever with thy blood,
And wash, and keep me clean."

It may be that the reader has struggled hard and long to obtain the mastery over some easily-besetting sin. All your efforts have hitherto proved unavailing. The more you strive against it, the more you feel its power. You are discouraged,

and ready to conclude that what you are now you will remain—that all your days you will drag heavily along in your pilgrimage to the “better country.” But may you not have misapprehended the way in which the conquest is to be achieved? Are you not trusting in yourself instead of trusting in Christ—striving to overcome sin in your own strength instead of in his? Let the eye of your faith now be steadfastly fixed on him, and plead with him to do for you what in vain you have tried to do for yourself. Look to him as you did when you first felt the burden of sin, and found in him a free justification; look to him for light, strength, purity, comfort—for *all*. In him dwelleth all fullness. “Ye are complete in him.” “I find,” says a pious lady of Scotland, “it is only by looking to Jesus I can either increase or retain what he has bestowed. The Lord does, I think, more than ever enable me to live by believing in him and looking to him. My life, in a small degree, is one continued looking up to him, dwelling under the covert of his blood, and realizing the presence of my God; this spreads a heavenly serenity through my mind, and sweetly solemnizes my spirit.”

CHAPTER VI.

*MORNING DEVOTION—BEGINNING THE DAY
WITH GOD.*

“MY voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord.” A life of piety can be maintained only by daily prayer, and the sooner the duty is attended to in the morning the better shall we be prepared to meet the events and responsibilities of the day.

First of all, there should be an early and grateful acknowledgment of the kind providence that has watched over us during the night, refreshed us with sleep, and brought us to welcome the light of a new day. “It is good to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High; to show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.”

Next, there should be a renewed dedication of our lives to God, of body and soul, with a sincere desire and purpose to walk in the way of his commandments and live for his glory.

Then should follow earnest supplication for the Divine guidance, protection, and blessing through the entire day, committing all our interests into the

hands of God, to dispose of us according to his holy pleasure. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Thus let every day begin with God. What we are in the morning we shall probably be in the evening. If we commence the day in a devout frame, we may hope to continue in that frame to the close.

There are special reasons why we should enter upon the day with prayer. It is now that we are commonly best fitted for the exercise. Our frames are most vigorous, our minds most tranquil, and our thoughts least occupied with the cares of the world. The adorable Saviour, though he sometimes spent the whole night in prayer, we are told arose a great while before day to pour out his heart in supplication.

When we enter upon a new day, we enter upon a new step in life. What events may be before us is known alone to Him in whose hands is our breath, and whose are all our ways. Who can tell what temptations may assail us, what trials may meet us, what responsibilities may be laid upon us. God may lead us by a way we know not, a way entirely different from that we have marked out for ourselves. Disease may invade our frames, hopes

may be blasted, loved ones may be torn from our embrace. Our mountain, that now appears to stand strong, may suddenly be moved ; the tempter may assail us at the most vulnerable point. We may be thrown into new situations, our integrity may be subjected to new tests, and it may require more than ordinary grace to maintain our firmness. "A change of circumstances in our condition in life is a critical period. A man who has not passed through such a change can form no adequate notion of its effect upon the mind."

Where, then, is our security ? In ourselves ? Who that knows his own heart can trust it for a moment. The very first assault of temptation may move us from our steadfastness, and find us in the grasp of the enemy. You have seen the tall oak that has stood year after year, firm as a rock, suddenly swept away by the tempest, and laid prostrate upon the earth. So it has been with many a promising professor who has trusted in himself, and failed to look to God for protection. "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." "Be thou my arm every morning ; my salvation also in time of trouble."

Happily we have the promise, "As thy day, so shall thy strength be." "Wait on the Lord ; be of

good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart ; wait, I say, on the Lord."

"If my heart," says Bishop Hall, "be early seasoned with the Lord's presence, it will savor of him all day after." "I feel," says McCheyne, "it is far better to begin with God, to see his face first, to get my soul near him before it is near another." "With him," writes his biographer, "the commencement of all labor invariably consisted in the preparation of his own soul. The forerunner of each day's visitations was a calm season of private devotion during morning hours."

"My sweetest time for secret prayer," says Lady Maxwell, "is early in the morning. In the morning, when I first open my eyelids, oh, how delightful do I feel it to fly by faith to Jesus."

Bunyan represents his Pilgrim, after reposing during the night in "the Chamber of Peace," as awaking at the break of day and singing to the praise of his great Redeemer :

"Where am I now? Is this the love and care
Of Jesus, for the men that pilgrims are
Thus to provide? That I should be forgiven,
And dwell already the next door to heaven!"

Devoting an early part of the day to prayer, and receiving fresh communications of divine grace,

what a tendency has it to prepare us for every duty, nerve us for every conflict, fit us for every emergency ; and while in the world, lift us above the world, calmly reposing our spirits upon the bosom of a faithful, unchangeable God. We are told that "travellers in Alpine regions are encompassed with clear atmosphere and cloudless sunshine while traversing the summits of those lofty mountains, at the very time that the world below them is all wrapped in mists and darkness, and thunder-clouds are bursting at their feet. Even thus does prayer lift the believer to a loftier and serener region, far above the clouds and storms that darken and distract the world. In that region of purity and peace the atmosphere is clear and calm ; the light of God's countenance shines brightly on the believer's soul, while he sees the thunder-cloud of earthly care and sorrow rolling beneath his feet, thus realizing the beautiful illustration of the poet :

“ ‘ As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
 Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
 Though round its base the rolling clouds are spread,
 Eternal sunshine settles on its head.’ ”

Pressing engagements may sometimes furnish a strong temptation either to omit the morning prayer, or to hurry it over with but little devotion. When

placed in such circumstances, we should regard it as but a trivial self-denial to rise at an earlier hour, so as to afford ample time to pay our customary visit to the throne of grace. By no means should we venture upon a journey or engage in any business without first invoking the guidance and blessing of Heaven. It is related of Colonel Gardiner that "if at any time he was obliged to go out before six in the morning, he rose proportionally sooner ; so that when a journey or a march has required him to be on horseback by four, he would be at his devotions at farthest by two." God, however, does not regard so much the length of our prayers as the spirit in which they are offered. Better is it to spend a few moments in converse with him than to omit the duty altogether.

CHAPTER VII.

CONTINUAL PRAYER.

“PRAY without ceasing—continuing instant in prayer—men ought always to pray, and not to faint—praying always with all prayer.”

What is the proper meaning of these passages? They all inculcate the duty of *continual* prayer; but in what sense is this to be understood?

It cannot be supposed that we are constantly to be engaged in vocal prayer, or in the act of offering our petitions to God. This would not only be inconsistent with the laws of our physical being, but would also interfere with other duties equally binding.

Every Christian, it may be assumed, will have *stated seasons* for prayer, seasons which should be regarded as sacred, and which nothing but some unavoidable hindrance should lead him to neglect. No rule, however, can be laid down as to the *frequency* of such seasons. The Scriptures have not prescribed any, and our circumstances differ so materially that it would be impossible to fix on any

that would suit in all cases. "Evening, morning, and noon," said the Psalmist, "will I pray, and cry aloud." And what Christian, deeply sensible of his wants, and properly appreciating the privilege of prayer, can be satisfied with repairing to the throne of grace less frequently? We need not fear that we shall pray too often. Does the affectionate child ask how often it shall express its love to its parents? Prayer is the converse of the soul with God, and we may be sure that we cannot speak to him too often or ask of him too much.

Important as may be these three stated seasons of daily prayer, a Christian living in close fellowship with God can hardly limit himself to them. There will be days when his wants will appear so numerous and pressing, and when he will so ardently long to pour forth his desires to God, that nothing but repeated prayer can bring him any relief. Persons of eminent piety have been in the practice of setting apart whole days for humiliation and prayer, and such seasons have been found one of the most effectual means of their spiritual advancement.

There are occasions when special seasons of prayer are particularly appropriate. You may be about to take some important step in life, may have

some new responsibilities thrown upon you, or may have met with some new trial. To whom, in the hour of your need, will you repair for guidance and support, but to Him who orders all things in wisdom and benevolence? Let us learn a lesson from the example of our blessed Master, who at his baptism, in his conflict with the tempter, at the commissioning of the twelve apostles, and on other occasions of special interest, devoutly looked to Heaven for needed grace.

But there is still another meaning that may be attached to these exhortations to continual prayer. They may include also what has been appropriately denominated *mental* or *ejaculatory* prayer—the silent offering up of our petitions to God.

This kind of prayer is suited to all times and places. At home, abroad, in solitude, in company, on a bed of sickness, or amid the daily concerns of life, “in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving,” we may let our “requests be made known to God.”

The following case may perhaps afford one of the best illustrations of such prayer. At a meeting of ministers the question was discussed, How can the command to “pray without ceasing” be complied with? “Various suppositions were started,

and at length one of the number was appointed to write an essay upon it, to be read at the next monthly meeting; which being overheard by a female servant, she exclaimed, 'What! a whole month wanted to tell the meaning of that text! It is one of the easiest and best texts in the Bible.' 'Well, well,' said an old minister, 'Mary, what can you say about it? Let us know how you understand it. Can you pray all the time?' 'Oh yes, sir.' 'What! when you have so many things to do?' 'Why, sir, the more I have to do, the more I can pray.' 'Indeed; well, Mary, do let us know how it is, for most people think otherwise.' 'Well, sir,' said the girl, 'when I first open my eyes in the morning, I pray, "Lord, open the eyes of my understanding;" and while I am dressing I pray that I may be clothed with the robe of righteousness; and when I have washed myself I ask for the washing of regeneration; and as I begin to work I pray that I may have strength equal to my day. When I begin to kindle the fire I pray that God's work may revive in my soul; and as I sweep out the house I pray that my heart may be cleansed from all its impurities; and while preparing and partaking of breakfast I desire to be fed with the hidden manna and the sincere milk of the word; and as I am busy

with the little children, I look up to God as my Father, and pray for the spirit of adoption, that I may be his child; and so on all day; everything I do furnishes me with a thought for prayer.'

"'Enough, enough!' cried the old divine; 'these things are revealed to babes, and often hid from the wise and prudent. Go on, Mary,' said he, 'pray without ceasing; and as for us, my brethren, let us bless the Lord for this exposition, and remember that he has said, the meek will he guide in judgment.'

"The essay, as a matter of course, was not considered necessary after this little event occurred."

This devotional frame of mind can exist only in connection with a high degree of spirituality and a will in harmony with the will of God. Our thoughts must be habitually fixed on God. No sin must be suffered to shut out the light of his face and hinder our free access to him at all times. We must desire only what he desires. Every desire then becomes virtually prayer, whether expressed in words or simply the offering of the heart. Prayer thus becomes more a habit than an act. "Delight thyself in the Lord, and he will give thee the desire of thy heart." It was the resolve of Hannah More

"never to pass an hour without lifting up her heart to God through Christ to aid her to live for him."

It is said of Dr. Payson that he needed not to go to the throne of grace, for he was always there. Everything was commenced, continued, and closed with prayer. He studied, he wrote, he preached, he planned, he visited, with prayer.

In this stirring age there is a special necessity to cherish the spirit of devotion. Prayer is the very life of piety. "Apostasy begins at the closet-door." We may attend to all the public means of grace, and yet the divine life within us may languish, unless sustained by communion with God in the closet. We must retire from the crowd, place ourselves in the immediate presence of the Searcher of hearts, and unbosom to him all our wants and desires.

On that very day when Archbishop Cranmer signed a recantation by which, contrary to his own better convictions, he renounced Protestantism for Popery, *he left his closet without prayer.* Had he there sought his usual aid from on high, how different, in all probability, would have been his course in the hour of trial, and what remorse and anguish might he thus have avoided.

A Christian lady has remarked, "If all the twelve apostles were preaching in a certain town, and we could have the privilege of hearing them preach, yet if they kept us out of our closets, and led us to neglect prayer, better for us never to have heard their names, than to have gone to listen to them."

CHAPTER VIII.

WATCHFULNESS.

IT is remarkable how closely the Scriptures connect the duty of watchfulness with that of prayer: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation—continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving—praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto," etc.

We have here the union of divine and human agency. While we pray that we may be kept by the power of God, we must at the same time keep our own hearts with all diligence. Important as prayer is, it will avail nothing without watchfulness. Not only should we watch while engaged in prayer against all wandering thoughts and unbelieving suggestions, but after we have prayed, looking for an answer to our petitions, and sedulously guarding against whatever may hinder the efficacy of our prayers. "Prayer without watchfulness is hypocrisy; watchfulness without prayer is presumption."

Watchfulness implies danger, and furnishes the means by which, in humble dependence on divine

aid, we are to guard against it. The world is a great battlefield. Enemies lie in ambush in every direction, who may spring upon us at any moment, and there is no security but in perpetual vigilance.

The source of all temptation, however, is in man himself. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." There is always some lust, some desire, some propensity, which gives to temptation all its power.

Man is possessed of certain *appetites and passions*, constituting a part of his very nature, as formed by the Creator himself. Innocent as these may be in themselves, they may become the occasion of sin. They may be gratified in an improper manner, or may be indulged in an undue degree. While the desire for food is entirely lawful, its excessive indulgence may become sin. So too with the sensation of thirst, when we attempt to allay it by what is hurtful either to body or mind.

There are also in the constitution of man certain *mental* propensities or desires, which, when properly directed, are entirely harmless ; such, for example, as the desire of knowledge, the desire of possession, the desire of reputation. It was not wrong for the primitive pair to desire an increase of wisdom, but that desire became sin when in-

dulged contrary to the will of God. It is not wrong to desire a good name ; but if we seek it at the sacrifice of duty, we forfeit the favor of God.

Man is possessed of *domestic and social* affections, and these may lead to attachments inconsistent with the will and honor of God.

These constitutional affections and propensities have all become vitiated or depraved by the fall, and hence the power of external objects to affect the mind and prove a source of temptation.

Temptations may arise from the *company* with which we mingle. We are constantly affected by the sentiments and conduct of those around us. A single word may leave an impression for good or evil that may become indelible.

Our *reading* may be a source of temptation. A bad book may do us more harm than a bad man. A publication, while it may contain much truth, may also contain much error, and the danger is that we shall be far more influenced by the error than the truth.

Our *occupation or calling* in life may lead us into temptation. Lawful as it may be, we may become so absorbed in it as to neglect the higher interests of eternity, or transact our business in violation of the strict principles of integrity.

Our *recreations and amusements* may become a temptation. We may be ensnared by indulgences that tend to alienate the heart from God, and render us "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

Temptations may arise *from our circumstances* in life. Wealth has its temptations, poverty has its temptations, and every situation has its temptations. A transition from opulence to poverty, or from poverty to opulence, is often attended with peculiar danger.

Our *physical infirmities* may tempt us to neglect religious duties and produce a spirit of fretfulness and distrust.

Our greatest danger often results from the most trivial causes. We are on our guard against great and violent temptations, but may see little necessity to watch against those daily trials that beset our path. Job could bear his losses and bereavements with devout submission, but became irritated and impatient under the unkind censures of his friends.

In addition to all these sources and occasions of temptation, demanding incessant watchfulness, we must also remember the *constant agency of the arch-enemy to draw us into sin*. Invisible as that agency is, it is on that account the more dangerous.

With unceasing vigilance he watches every opportunity to entice us to evil. He makes his appeal to our senses and all the susceptibilities of our nature, and adapts his assaults to all the varying circumstances of our life. He has temptations for the eye, the ear, the taste, and for every power and faculty of our minds. The Scriptures speak of his *wiles*, his *snare*s, his *depths*, his *devices*, his *fiery darts*. When he does not meet us "as a roaring lion," he "transforms himself into an angel of light."

How important, then, the admonition, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Watchfulness is opposed to a spirit of slumber and indolence. We must watch against all the *occasions* of temptation. These, indeed, are often unavoidable. We are constantly surrounded with objects and influences calculated to entice us to sin. There may be no possibility of avoiding them. Fly to the wilderness, and they will meet you there. Shut yourself up in a cloister, and they will meet you there.

But there are certain sources of temptation which it may be possible to shun. Experience and observation have taught us their dangerous tendency, and our safety depends on keeping at a distance from them. Never read any book, never

minge with any company, never engage in any business, never form any connections, never participate in any amusement, that is likely to prove a snare to your soul. If you suffer yourself to be carried away by worldly fascinations, to read demoralizing publications, to engage in business of doubtful propriety, or to form connections for life with those who are strangers to grace, you thus place yourself in the current of temptation, and must expect to be borne along to the vortex of ruin. "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?"

Watch against the first assault of temptation. Give no place to the tempter. Guard against the beginning of evil. Stop that thought. Crush that feeling. Guard the door of your lips. Beware of a self-confident spirit. Angels fell, the primitive pair fell, and the most eminent saint would fall were it not that underneath him are the everlasting arms. It is the policy of the enemy to assail us at what we may regard the most invulnerable point. Moses, with all his meekness, "spake unadvisedly with his lips." Abraham, with all his faith, gave way to distrust. Peter, with all his boldness, denied his Lord and Saviour. No man, however

holy, knows what temptations he may yet encounter; no man, whatever may be his present firmness, would be secure a moment were he not upheld by an almighty hand. "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

This warfare with our spiritual foes must be renewed daily, and continued during life. It will end only with the end of our probation. No matter what attainments you may have made in holiness, you have constant need of watchfulness and prayer, just as much as you had when you entered upon your religious course.

"Life is the scene of conflict, not of rest;
Man's is laborious happiness at best;
On this side death his dangers never cease,
His joys are joys of conquest, not of peace."

It is our comfort to know that the grace of God will ever be sufficient, and that ultimately we shall come off even more than conquerors. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

CHAPTER IX.

SPIRITUAL FOOD.

THE soul can no more live without food than the body, and God has kindly provided for both. Divine truth, contained in the Sacred Scriptures, is man's spiritual aliment. "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." The Word of God not only furnishes milk for babes, but also meat for those who are more advanced in the divine life. Holiness in man, though the fruit of the Spirit, is effected through the instrumentality of truth. "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth." And as truth is the means of our regeneration, so is it also of our progressive sanctification. "Sanctify them," prayed Jesus, "through thy truth ; thy word is truth." All the exercises of the renewed heart are produced in view of the objects and motives presented in the Scriptures : love to God in view of his infinite perfection ; repentance in view of the evil of sin ; faith in view of the person and offices of Christ ; submission in view of the divine supremacy. "All

Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Progress in grace must be the result of progress in divine knowledge. There may indeed be growth in knowledge where there is no corresponding growth in grace; yet so intimate is the relation of the two, that in urging the duty of religious advancement, the apostle has connected them: "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." An increase of love to God, hatred of sin, faith in Christ, or any other gracious exercise, must be the effect of a clearer apprehension of evangelical truth.

There is everything in the Word of God adapted to man's spiritual wants and the promotion of his religious advancement.

Do you need *light*? "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Do you need *strength*? "Strengthen thou me, according to thy word." Do you need *comfort*? "This is my comfort in my affliction; for thy word hath quickened me." Do you need *restraint from sin*? "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against

thee." Do you need *quickenings*? "My soul cleaveth unto the dust; quicken thou me, according to thy word." Do you need a *spiritual weapon*? "The sword of the Spirit is the word of God."

Important, however, as is an intimate acquaintance with the Word of God to our religious progress, everything depends on the manner in which the Scriptures are read. They may be read merely from custom, from a sense of duty, or as a mere literary production, without any direct view to our spiritual benefit. It is certainly proper that they should be studied *critically*—studied with the earnest endeavor to ascertain the meaning of every chapter and verse. All may not be equally capable of this, and yet there are but few Christians who may not, by availing themselves of the *helps* within their reach, acquire in the course of time a very accurate and extensive knowledge of the Sacred Writings.

But we now have in view more especially the *devotional* reading of the Bible—reading it with direct reference to our spiritual edification. No rule can be prescribed as to the best method to secure this object, what portion of the Scriptures to read, or how much to read at one time. The reader must here consult his own state of mind and

circumstances. It is not the quantity of food we eat that nourishes us, but its thorough digestion. Not only must we "read, mark, learn," but "*inwardly digest*" the word of God. Better read but a few verses with serious attention, than hurriedly and without reflection to pass over a whole chapter.

Read with *self-application*. Remember that the Bible is a message from God to man, a message to you as an individual, addressing you on matters of infinite moment, and demanding your most earnest attention.

Read it with *devout meditation*. Dwell on the passage before you until you fully enter into its spirit, and it becomes deeply impressed upon your heart. "Oh," said the Psalmist, "how love I thy law ; it is my meditation all the day."

Read it with *faith*. Come to the Bible, not as a teacher, but as a learner. Attempt not to set up your own judgment in opposition to the revelations of infinite wisdom. Be not content with half of a Bible. You must receive all or none. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Receive it, "not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God."

Above all, read it with *prayer for divine illumination*. The same Spirit that inspired the Bible

can alone enable you rightly to understand it. "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God."

Luther studied the Bible on his knees. So did also Dr. Thomas Scott, to whose highly devotional spirit we are indebted for his excellent Commentary. "Open thou mine eyes," prayed David, "that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

The Bible should be read *daily*. We need daily nourishment for the soul as much as we do for the body. The Israelites were to gather manna daily, and so should we gather day by day the spiritual food of God's word. The venerable John Quincy Adams, a short time before his death, stated to a friend that since the age of thirty he had been accustomed, among the first things, to read the Bible every morning. With but few interruptions he pursued this course for half a century.

There can be no *substitute* for the word of God. However highly we may value the productions of men, they must never be suffered to occupy the place of the inspired page. The Bible is the source of all divine knowledge; the works of good men are only the streams, too often partaking of the quality of the soil through which they flow. Luther

“professed that if he thought the reading of *his* books would hinder the reading of the Holy Scriptures, he would burn them all before he died.” Henry Martyn was once placed in circumstances that prevented him from having access to almost any other book but the Bible. “For want of other books I was obliged to read my Bible almost exclusively, and from this I derived great spirituality of mind, compared with what I had before.” And does not this accord with the experience of Christians generally? The more they honor God’s word, the more will he honor them. Let us, in the language of James B. Taylor, strive to be *Bible Christians*. Let every point of doctrine and duty be tried by “the law and the testimony.” Let “the word of God dwell in us richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” Let it be our constant companion, our comfort in life, and our support in death.

“Oh, may these heavenly pages be
My ever dear delight,
And still new beauties may I see,
And still increasing light.”

CHAPTER X.

REALIZING THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

THE presence of God fills immensity. "He is not far from every one of us ; for in him we live, and move, and have our being." But who realizes the fact? It is one thing to admit it in theory, another to act under its influence ; one thing to be intellectually convinced of it, another to be deeply conscious of it. It is recorded of Enoch that "he walked with God." He felt that God was ever near to him, and lived as in his presence, walking in the same path, pursuing the same end. Moses, it is said, "endured as seeing him who is invisible." This may seem like a paradox. How can we see what is invisible? With the eye of sense "no man hath seen God at any time ;" and yet to the eye of faith he may be ever present.

"Faith lends its realizing light ;
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly ;
The invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye."

The wicked are said to be "without God in the world," living virtually as if there were no God to

whom they are accountable, and who takes cognizance of all their doings. It is the effect of true piety to bring God ever near, to produce an abiding consciousness of his presence. Thus the Psalmist, deeply impressed with the all-pervading presence of God, exclaims, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" etc. President Edwards, it is said, had at all times such a consciousness of the presence of God as affected his whole demeanor, influencing all his preparations for the pulpit and all his public services, and producing an effect upon his audience that was irresistible.

The life of piety depends upon habitually cherishing a sense of the Divine presence. Whether at home or abroad, whether in the sanctuary or in the midst of our worldly avocations, we must feel that we are surrounded by an everywhere-present and always-present Jehovah.

"Within thy circling power I stand,
On every side I find thy hand;
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with God."

What a check would the conviction of this truth give to sin. Who would dare to sin, did he realize that the searching eye of God is upon him? "I

have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies," says David, "for all my ways are before thee."

What a motive to sincerity. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart."

What a spur to our devotions. "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth."

What a comfort in affliction. "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."

You retire to the closet for prayer. No human eye is upon you, but your heavenly Father seeth in secret, and will reward you openly.

You enter the sanctuary, and under the awe-inspiring presence of God, exclaim, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven."

You embark upon the ocean; but you behold God there, holding the winds in his hands, and saying to the raging billows, "Peace, be still!"

You wander in the dreary desert; but you see the footprints of the great Creator there, and feel that his unseen hand is directing all your steps. Alone, yet not alone amid the deepest solitudes that can be found on earth.

You are shut up in prison; but with the con-

sciousness that you are suffering for righteousness' sake, your prison is turned into a palace, resounding with songs of rejoicing and praise.

You are confined to a bed of sickness ; but illuminated with the light of God's countenance, your chamber becomes a Bethel.

You pass through the valley of death ; but even there you say, "Thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

We cannot appreciate too highly the influence which the habitual realization of the presence of God would exert upon our religious character. Let the impression of that presence upon us be so deep and permanent, that wherever we go and whatever we do, we shall feel that we are under the Divine inspection. Never do anything you are unwilling God should witness ; never utter anything you are unwilling God should hear ; never cherish a thought you are unwilling God should know ; never go anywhere you are unwilling God should go with you. Live every moment as in his sight ; and let it be your comfort by day and by night that he is present with you, not merely as the Spectator of your conduct and the Searcher of your heart, but as your sympathizing Friend, a "very present help" in every time of need and trouble.

CHAPTER XI.

TRIALS SANCTIFIED.

THE subject of our consideration in this chapter is closely connected with the general design of this volume. Eminent piety is usually attained only through severe trials. It has ever been the course of the Lord first to lead his people into the valley of humiliation before he exalts them to distinguished honors and comforts—first to cause them “to sing of judgment” before they “sing of mercy.” Labor precedes rest, conflict precedes victory.

The trials of good men are various. In addition to those that are common to humanity, they have others that are peculiar to them. Trials may arise from pecuniary losses, disappointed hopes, the provocation of enemies, the instability of friends, physical infirmities, painful bereavements, etc. Some of these trials come directly from the hand of God, some from the hand of man, some from the agency of evil spirits; but all are either permitted or ordered by the Great Ruler for the spiritual good of believers.

The trials of some are chiefly internal, of others

external, and in many instances the two are combined. There are trials of faith, of patience, of submission, of self-denial, of humility, of temper, of integrity. Thus Job, Abraham, Elijah, Daniel, Paul, and the "great cloud of witnesses," whose faith and patience we are exhorted to follow, all had their peculiar trials, through which they passed to their eternal reward. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man."

These trials are designed as a *test of character*. As gold is exposed to the action of fire to distinguish it from base metal, so does God subject our religion to various trials, in order to test its genuineness. There is much that has the appearance of religion that is not really such. It is desirable, therefore, that we should be placed in circumstances that will aid us in determining our true character—to undeceive us if deceived, and to confirm our confidence if well grounded. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

There are certain plants that flourish best in the shade. Exposed to the sun, they wither and die. It is not in the sunshine of prosperity, but in the clouds of adversity, that Christians commonly attain the highest spiritual prosperity.

There are also plants that do not fully emit their fragrance until bruised. So there are Christian graces that do not fully develop their sweetness and virtue but under the pressure of severe trials. "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." "There is something," says the Rev. Samuel Pearce, "in affliction itself which, by increasing the delicacy of our feelings, and detaching our thoughts from the usual round of objects which present themselves to the mind when in a state of health, may be easily conceived to make us susceptible of stronger and more permanent impressions of an affectionate character."

"Every branch," says Jesus, "that beareth fruit, he purgeth (or pruneth) it, that it may bring forth more fruit." The removal of the small shoots, and occasionally a large branch, from the vine, may be essential both to its vigor and its fruitfulness. So the Christian's advancement in holiness and usefulness may be best promoted by cutting off from him

all those excrescences by which his spiritual growth may have been retarded. The process, though painful, is often most salutary.

God does not deal with all his people alike. There are some who appear to attain a high degree of piety without any severe conflicts. Such, however, is not usually the case. The redeemed are all represented to have entered heaven "through great tribulation." If the Christian is not tried in one way, he will be in another. What may be a trial to some, may not be to others. The saints are all said to be in God's hands. He not only appoints their trials, but wisely adapts them to the end in view.

You take up the memoirs of some eminently pious person, and say, "I will strive to be like him. I will follow him as he followed the Saviour. I will endeavor to enjoy the same communion with God, the same power in prayer, the same exulting hopes."

But, dear reader, are you prepared to receive the same baptism of suffering, to pass through the same conflicts, in order to reach the desired eminence? It may be that the reader is now passing under "the rod of the covenant." One stroke has succeeded another, and you are ready to ask, "Why, if God loves me, has he made me his mark? Why,

if I am his child, has he permitted these troubles to come upon me? Why has he removed my property, blighted my prospects, torn from me my child and the partner of my bosom? Why these temptations of the adversary, these 'fiery darts' with which I am so constantly assailed?" Why? Because God designs to consummate the work of grace he has commenced, to lead you to clearer views of your weakness and dependence, to produce in you deeper humility, to render the Saviour increasingly precious, and to afford you fuller manifestations of his glory. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." "Oh, my God!" prayed Lady Maxwell, "put thou a thorn in every enjoyment, a worm in every gourd, that would either prevent my being wholly thine, or in any measure retard my progress in the divine life." And has not the reader offered the same prayer? Has he not repeatedly said,

"The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee"?

Why then complain when God is so manifestly answering your prayer? Why dictate to his infinite wisdom how he shall accomplish his gracious

purpose in your salvation? Say not, "My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God;" but, rather, "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."

The trial through which the reader may now be passing may be longer or shorter as God in his adorable wisdom and goodness may direct. In the mean time his watchful eye is ever upon you, and you will see in the end that he has "done all things well." Job's last days were his best days; and so when the God of all grace and comfort has accomplished his purpose in your trials, you will attain a spiritual prosperity unknown in your previous experience. "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Mal. 3: 2, 3.

We are told that a number of ladies in Dublin were in the practice of meeting together to read the Scriptures and make them the subject of profitable conversation. After discussing the second and third verses of the third chapter of the prophecy of Malachi respecting the method of purifying the precious metals, one of the ladies went to a sil-

versmith with whom she was acquainted to inquire how it was effected, and particularly what was the business of the refiner himself during the operation. "Do you *sit*, sir, at the work?" "Oh yes," he replied; "for I must keep my eye steadily fixed on the furnace, for if the silver remain too long under the intense heat it is sure to be damaged." She at once saw the beauty and propriety of the image employed—"He shall sit as a refiner of silver." As she was returning to the ladies with the information, he called her back, and remarked there was one thing of importance he had forgotten to mention, and that was that he only knew the exact instant when the purifying process was complete by then seeing his own countenance in it. Again the *spiritual* meaning shone forth through the beautiful veil of the letter—when God sees his own image in his people, the work of sanctification is complete. It may be added that the metal continues in a state of agitation till all the impurities are thrown off, and then it becomes *quite still*, a circumstance which heightens the exquisite analogy of the case.

"He that from dross would win the precious ore,
Bends o'er the crucible an earnest eye,
The subtle searching process to explore,
Lest the one brilliant moment should pass by

When in the molten silver's virgin mass

He meets his pictured face, as in a glass.

Thus in God's furnace are his people tried ;

Thrice happy they who to the end endure.

But who the fiery trial may abide ?

Who from the crucible come forth so pure,

That He whose eyes of flame look through the whole,

May see his image perfect in the soul ?

Nor with an evanescent glimpse alone,

As in that mirror the refiner's face,

But stamped with heaven's broad seal that there be shown

Immanuel's features full of truth and grace ;

And round the seal of love this motto be,

'Not for a moment, but eternity.' ”

CHAPTER XII.

LIVING TO THE LORD.

WHEN that distinguished statesman and philanthropist, William Wilberforce, was requested by a lady to furnish for her album an article that might serve as a motto for her future life, he wrote, "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." A more suitable one he could not have penned. The passage is descriptive of piety, not merely in its higher stages, but of Christian character generally. Entire consecration to Christ is the indispensable condition of discipleship. Luke 14: 33.

Living to the Lord is directly the opposite of living to ourselves. The one is characteristic of the spiritual man; the other of the natural man. In their apostate state men are described as "lovers of their own selves." Selfishness, or the inordinate love of self in some form, sways every unrenewed mind.

It is one grand design of redemption to subdue this principle of selfishness, and enthrone God upon the human heart. Christ "died for all," that they should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again. Man's chief end, both in creation and redemption, is "to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever."

"But how," it may be asked, "can a creature so feeble and unworthy, glorify God?" Not by enhancing his essential glory and blessedness, for "our goodness extendeth not unto him," but by adoring his infinite perfections, acknowledging his supremacy, submitting to his will, acquiescing in his plan of redeeming mercy, approving his dispensations, obeying his precepts, reflecting his image, and promoting the great interests of his moral kingdom. Every man must have some supreme object of affection and pursuit, and the nature of that object determines his character. Either God or self must be uppermost in every human breast.

A regard to the glory of God must be the controlling principle of our whole life, of every action of our life. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." This rule must govern us not merely in our devo-

tional exercises, but in all our secular concerns. We must engage in no business but what is strictly lawful, and none however lawful, unless conducted on the principle of justice and equity. Wealth must be sought, not as the means of personal aggrandizement, but as a means of usefulness, and on all our possessions, whether little or much, must be inscribed in legible characters, "Holiness unto the Lord." Influenced by such motives, the daily avocations of life, so far from interfering with our spiritual welfare, would tend to promote it. We should regard ourselves as the servants of God in all things. Every duty would be observed as a religious duty, and business then, instead of proving, as it too often does, a clog to our heavenward progress, would prove to us, as a good man (Normand Smith) once said it was to him, "a means of grace." "From the time when he devoted all to God, and resolved to pursue his business as a part of his religion, he found no tendency in his worldly engagements to chill his piety or enchain his affections to earth."

We may be as selfish in our religion as in our worldly pursuits. We cannot, indeed, be too much in earnest in working out our own salvation; but we may be so absorbed in our personal comfort

and enjoyment as to lose sight of God's glory, thus entirely reversing the divine order, and hindering our own spiritual interest. In all our prayers for ourselves and for others, in all our efforts for the salvation of souls, in the employment of all our bodily and mental energies, our first desire should be that God may be glorified. It is possible, indeed, to mistake our mental exercises. There is a fire of our own kindling as well as that which is of celestial origin, but as there is an essential distinction between true and false religion, why may we not be as conscious that we are now living for the glory of God as we are that we once lived only for ourselves? That self-denying missionary, David Brainerd, could say, "I as sincerely desire to love and glorify God as any angel in heaven." And who, in view of the discomforts and hardships which he so cheerfully endured for Christ's sake, can question his sincerity.

That devoted philanthropist, Mrs. Elizabeth Fry, in her last illness solemnly declared to her daughter, "I can say one thing: since my heart was touched at the age of seventeen, I believe I have never awakened from sleep, in sickness or in health, by day or by night, without my first waking thought being how best I might serve my Lord."

If we would live to the Lord, we must fully sympathize with him in his great designs, and become co-workers with him in their accomplishment. We live in a world which, though fallen, is under a dispensation of mercy. In the salvation of souls God is eminently glorified. When he appears to build up Zion, he appears in his glory. In this stupendous enterprise he permits us to take part. He has saved us that we may become the instruments of salvation to others; enlightened us that we may reflect light upon others. In a world so full of sin and suffering, we can surely be at no loss for something to do, by which we may further the designs of infinite benevolence. The *temporal* wants of man should by no means be overlooked. We are directed to "put on bowels of mercy, to do good to all men, to be ready to distribute, to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice."

The *salvation of the soul* claims our special regard. And where shall we begin our efforts, if not with those under our own roof—our children, our domestics, and those with whom we are daily surrounded and conversant? The souls of these may be no more valuable than others, but there is thrown upon us a most sacred responsibility to

labor for their spiritual welfare, and there is a manifest inconsistency in directing our attention to others, while those under our immediate care, and to whom we have constant access, are neglected. Dr. Thomas Scott, the commentator, was a remarkable example of fidelity to his household. As the result of his fidelity, "his whole family became the sons and daughters of the Most High. Even to the domestics of the household did his example and prayers bring salvation."

But Christian charity, if it *begins* at home, does not *stay* at home.

"The little pebble stirs the peaceful lake;
The centre moved, a circle straight succeeds;
Another still, and still another spreads;
Friend, parent, neighbor, first it will embrace,
Our country next, then all the human race;
Wide and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind
Take every creature in, of every kind."

Our field is the world. For the world God has provided salvation, and to the world is the glorious news to be proclaimed. Our responsibility for the world's conversion is just in proportion to the influence we can exert in accomplishing it. We cannot convert the world ourselves, but we can use the means appointed for the purpose. We cannot speak to all about the great salvation, but

we can speak to God in their behalf. We cannot all go forth as missionaries to distant lands, but we can aid in sending forth others. "Go," says the Master, "into my vineyard and work." The rest into which the believer has entered is not one of mere repose or quietism ; but of the highest and noblest activity. Like the rest of heaven, it consists in serving God with holy ardor, and without interruption. The passive and active graces, as they have been termed, are inseparable. The calm repose of the spirit in its communion with God must ever be accompanied with a sincere desire to do his will and advance the interests of his kingdom. We are made and redeemed to be not merely recipients, but agents, not merely to receive good, but to do good, not merely for enjoyment, but for service. In former times the piety of Christians eminent for spirituality assumed a contemplative cast. They had not those facilities to spread the gospel which we possess, and perhaps were not duly impressed with their obligation to labor for this object ; but to us a great and an effectual door has been opened, the harvest everywhere is ripe, and we have only to thrust in the sickle and reap. We need now as much the cultivation of personal piety as ever ; but our piety may now flow in a

new channel, and receive new manifestations. Let it then be our constant endeavor to do something to extend the kingdom of God upon the earth. It is for this we are to live, and for this, when required, we are to be ready to die—

“Day after day filled up with blessed toil,
Hour after hour still bringing in new spoil.”

A distinguished statesman, near the close of life, said, “If I had but one day more to live, that day should be devoted to the good of my country.” Let the Christian ever be actuated by the same noble resolution in reference to the cause of his Saviour: whether your days be many or few, let them all be consecrated to him. Do something, do what you can, only let it be done with a single eye to the glory of God. The motive by which you are influenced is of far more importance than the act itself. “If two angels,” says the Rev. John Newton, “came down from heaven to execute a divine command, and one was appointed to conduct an empire, and the other to sweep a street in it, they would feel no inclination to change employments.” You may be shut up in a sick-chamber, but even there, by your cheerful submission to the divine will, and your earnest pleadings at the

throne of grace, you may glorify God quite as much as you could by active exertion.

“They also serve who only stand and wait.”

Never let the record be made, “I have lost a day.” Let no opportunity to do good be neglected. Let your life be a succession of sincere and earnest efforts to usher in the glorious era, when the glory of God will shine forth in the redemption of a world from sin and death.

“Live, live for God,
And toil a world to save;
Live, live for God,
Nor heed the coming grave;
The time, the place, the way,
He knows them all;
Do well thy work to-day,
And wait his call.”

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DAILY WALK.

CHRISTIAN piety and Christian morality, the religion of the heart and religion of the life, are inseparable. There can be no true piety, where there is no corresponding morality; and it is equally certain that there can be no true morality where there is no genuine piety. What a man is in heart he will be in life. "A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things."

Piety may be regarded as having more immediate reference to the duties we owe to God; morality to those that relate to man. He who is faithful in the discharge of the former can surely not be remiss in the latter. Love to God and love to man constituting the sum and substance of the divine law, are so connected the one can never exist without the other. There is, indeed, a kind of morality—the morality of the world—that is very different from Christian morality. The one is based upon piety; the other may have no relation to it what-

ever, may even be hostile to it. The one has its seat in the heart ; the other is merely external, and at best superficial and defective.

True piety will exert an influence over every social relation and every department of human life. What it is on the Sabbath, it is through the week. So far from being confined to the sanctuary, the communion-table, and the closet, it goes with men to the hall of legislation, the court of justice, the office, the store, the shop, the farm, the anvil, the loom," the kitchen—to all the varied occupations and pursuits of life. It will lead men to make no promises they do not intend to fulfil, to contract no debts there is not a reasonable prospect of paying, to withhold nothing from others that is their due, even though it may not be legally claimed, to use no weights or measures but such as are perfectly just, to take no advantage of the necessities, the ignorance, or the confidence of any either in buying or selling, to magnify no article beyond its worth in order to obtain an exorbitant price, nor to depreciate an article in order to obtain it at less than its real value.

Christian piety will render men kind, gentle, forbearing, and forgiving. It will make better husbands and wives, better masters and servants, bet-

ter rulers and citizens. "I would give nothing," says Rowland Hill, in his odd way, "for the Christianity of a man whose very dog and cat were not the better for his religion."

"Piety at home" will lead parents not only to instruct and counsel and pray for their children, but to set them a consistent example. When a Christian minister was asked what he thought of the piety of a certain individual, his reply was, "I do not know, I have never lived with him." The man who does not walk circumspectly before his house, but is known to be unkind, morose, and passionate, can hardly secure the confidence of the public, however splendid at times may be his deeds of charity. A Christian's character should be so unsullied as to be beyond suspicion. It is not enough that he is not chargeable with any flagrant transgression; like his divine Master he should be "holy, harmless, and undefiled." It should be his endeavor to avoid even "the appearance of evil." Instead of trying how near he can come with safety to the boundary line between right and wrong, he should guard against any proximity to it. A single blemish in a Christian professor may mar his whole character, and entirely neutralize his influence. Whatever may be his virtues, they may all be

covered by his defects. The slightest obliquity may be magnified into a crime. Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that it often requires more vigilance to guard against trivial defects than against great ones, more grace to endure our little everyday trials, than the severer ones with which in the providence of God we may be visited. "Many Christians," says the Rev. John Newton, "who bear the loss of a child, or the destruction of all their property, with the most heroic Christian fortitude, are entirely vanquished and overcome by the breaking of a dish, or the blunders of a servant, and show so unchristian a spirit that we cannot but wonder at them."

Our regard to the will of God may be as clearly indicated by a scrupulous attention to little things as by our attention to great things. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much." If you weigh a pound of tea, you may do it to the glory of God; if you cut a piece of cloth, you may do it to the glory of God; if you cultivate the soil, you may do it to the glory of God; if you indulge in any recreation, you may do it to the glory of God. Acting thus from Christian principle, you may be as much in the line of duty

in the ordinary transactions of life, as when engaged in prayer and praise.

In a sermon preached by the Rev. John Caird before the Queen of Great Britain on "Religion in common life," we have the following very pertinent and just remarks: "There is a very common tendency in our minds to classify actions according to their outward form rather than according to the spirit or motive which pervades them. Literature is sometimes arbitrarily divided into sacred and profane literature; history into sacred and profane history, in which classification the term 'profane' is applied, not to what is bad or unholy, but to everything that is not technically sacred or religious, to all literature that does not treat of religious doctrines and duties, and to all history save church history. And we are very apt to apply the same principle to actions. Thus in many pious minds, there is a tendency to regard all the actions of common life as by an unfortunate necessity lost to religion. Prayer, the reading of the Bible and devotional books, public worship, and buying, selling, digging, sowing, bartering, money-making, are separated into two distinct and almost hostile categories. The religious heart and sympathies are thrown entirely into the former, and the latter

are barely tolerated as a bondage incident to our fallen state, but almost of necessity tending to turn aside the heart from God."

Were religion always to be thus carried into all the concerns of life, what an illustration would be furnished of its loveliness, and what a confirmation of its reality. No Butler, nor Paley, nor any other writer on the Evidences of Christianity would be needed. The lives of professing Christians would afford an argument in its favor that would prove unanswerable. When a young man was examined with reference to his ordination to the Christian ministry, he stated that at one period of his life he was nearly an infidel; "but," said he, "there was one argument in favor of Christianity which I could never refute, the consistent conduct of my father."

The lives of Christians are the world's Bibles. Many who never read the Word of God daily read the conduct of those who profess to be governed by its principles, and form their judgment accordingly. Were all professors of religion to connect with ardent piety a strict morality, instead of the rebuke, "What do ye more than others?" would be heard the exclamation, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel."

Thus indeed would the tabernacles of God be with men, and he would dwell with them.

"I beseech you, brethren," says the apostle, "that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

It is a sad delusion when a men under pretext of magnifying the grace of the Gospel, abrogate the law of God, thus making Christ not a Saviour from sin, but the minister of sin, and by their godless lives bringing dishonor upon the sacred name by which they are called. It is a singular fact that this antinomianism has sometimes been connected with claims to superior illumination and with the most confident assurance of salvation. "Do we then make void the law of God through faith? God forbid ; yea, we establish the law."

"Mistaken souls ! that dream of heaven,
And make their empty boast
Of inward joys and sins forgiven,
While they are slaves to lust."

CHAPTER XIV.

SELF-COMMUNION.

SELF-COMMUNION is the converse of the soul with itself—thought responding to thought, the inspection of our own hearts with the view to ascertain their spiritual state. No one can truly know himself without this self-converse; and yet how sadly is the duty neglected, and how superficially often is it performed. We converse with men, we converse with books, but how seldom with ourselves. It is to this neglect we may attribute the self-deception so alarmingly prevalent among professors of religion. Many shrink from all close heart-searching, as if they already suspected that they could not bear the scrutiny. Whatever acquaintance they may have with other matters, they remain most deplorably ignorant of their own hearts. The want of reflection has ruined thousands. The Christian, even in his most advanced state, needs frequently to call himself to account and sit in judgment upon his spirit and conduct. The duty should not be confined to particular times, but should be an habitual exercise. Every action

should be thoroughly investigated, and its moral character determined as in the presence of God.

There are certain seasons when this self-converse is especially appropriate. Such, for example, is

The *anniversary of our birthday*. We now enter upon a new era in our life. How becoming, then, that we not only contemplate the future, but also call to remembrance the past. Let us say to ourselves, "Another year has been added to my probation ; how has the past been improved ? I have been placed here to act my part as a rational and responsible being, and to form a character that will fit me for an immortal existence hereafter. Have I devoted myself to the great business claiming my attention ? How stands my account for eternity ? For what purpose have I lived, and to what destiny am I tending in the future ?

"Through the kind providence of God I am permitted to commence a *new year*. The season invites reflection. Come, then, my wayward heart, and let us see what report the days of the departed year have borne to heaven. The past year, like others, has been one of distinguished mercy. What returns have I rendered to the Lord for all his benefits ? What improvement have I made of my

time? What progress have I made in the divine life? What have I done to glorify God and serve my generation? Whose wants have I supplied? Whose sorrows have I alleviated? For whose salvation have I labored? Think, oh, my soul, how rapidly thy days and years are passing away, and how quickly the night of death will terminate all opportunities for usefulness here on earth.

“I have been favored with *another Sabbath*. How have I spent the day that God claims especially as his own? Have I been ‘in the Spirit on the Lord’s day,’ ‘calling the Sabbath a delight, the Holy of the Lord, Honorable, not doing mine own ways, nor finding mine own pleasure, nor speaking mine own words’? I have listened to the message of the gospel; what benefit have I derived from it? I have read God’s holy word; what new light, strength, and comfort has it afforded me? I have appeared before God with my body, and honored him with my lips; have I worshipped him in spirit and in truth?

“Again it has been my privilege to partake of the *sacred emblems of my bleeding, dying Saviour*. Has it indeed been to me a banquet of love? Have I enjoyed communion with him and with his saints? Has my faith received new confirmation, and have

I left my vow of fidelity on his altar, fully resolved for him to live and for him to die?

"God has laid upon me his afflicting hand. In the day of adversity let me consider. What purpose is this affliction intended to accomplish, what evil to correct, what spiritual benefit to secure? Have I been truly submissive to the Divine will? Have I been led to see more clearly my frailty and dependence? Have my affections become more weaned from earth, and has my heart been drawn forth in more ardent aspirations after the everlasting rest of the saints?

"The curtains of night have again been thrown around me, the tumult of the world is hushed, the intrusions of company are withdrawn, sensible objects have retired from my view; let me, then, before I commit myself to sleep, commune with my own heart upon my bed; let me inquire what improvement I have made of the golden moments fled beyond recall: my *actions*—have they been such as God approves and my own conscience justifies? My *thoughts*—have they been fixed on God, or absorbed in the trifles of earth? My *affections*—have they been placed supremely on the Creator or the creature? My *words*—have they been such as are 'good to the use of edifying,' honorable to God, and

worthy of my Christian profession? My *motives*—will they bear the scrutiny of the Omniscient Eye and the revelations of the great day? My *worldly avocation*—has it been conducted on truly Christian principles, or in accordance with the corrupt maxims of the ungodly? My *intercourse with society*—what have I said or done calculated to promote either the temporal or the eternal interest of those with whom I have been associated? My *opportunities for usefulness*—have I diligently availed myself of them, and in any way advanced the cause of humanity and benevolence? The *precious Bible*—have I read it with attention, with self-application, and with profit? Have I made it ‘the man of my counsel and the guide of my life’? My *prayers*—have they been the outpouring of my soul to God? Have I spread before him all my wants, with full confidence in him as the hearer of prayer?”

Who, after this self-converse, will not find abundant cause both for thankfulness and humiliation—*thankfulness* that notwithstanding the obstacles that have opposed our progress, we have still, through divine grace, been enabled to hold on our way; *humiliation*, that while we may have been preserved from open transgression, we have come so far short of the perfect demands of God’s law? Let us remember

that there are sins of omission, as well as sins of commission ; sins that consist in leaving undone what we ought to do, as well as in doing what we ought not to do. You may love God sincerely, but may and ought you not to love him more ? You may have true benevolence, but may and ought not your benevolence to be more pure and unselfish ? You may possess the spirit of prayer, but may and ought you not to pray with more faith and importunity ? The last words of Archbishop Usher are said to have been, " O Lord, forgive me my sins of omission." And who that has any just views either of the extent of the divine law, or of the requirements of the gospel, can forbear exclaiming, " If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ?"

" The best obedience of my hands
Dares not appear before thy throne ;
But faith can answer thy demands
By pleading what my Lord has done."

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

1. *What an exalted and blessed life is one of true piety.* It has been truly designated as "the life of God in the soul of man." Not only has it its origin in God, but it also conforms us to the moral image of God. We become "partakers of the Divine nature," "partakers of God's holiness," having, in a measure, the same views, affections, and aims as the glorious and ever-blessed God himself. Greater dignity humanity cannot attain.

"A Christian is the highest style of man."

How far superior is this spiritual life to the mere life of nature—a life of inward purity, holy love, noble aspirations, and immortal hopes. The soul has now found its proper centre and rest, and its most enlarged desires are satisfied in communion with the fountain of all good. "Oh," says the seraphic Summerfield, "what a heaven is this, when love dwells in the heart, looks out at the eye, beams in the face, breathes from the lips, distils from the hands, moves in the feet, and creates an atmosphere all around which angels might delight to inhale!

‘He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.’”

Life with the Christian is not a round of fashionable folly, or the vain pursuit of earthly fame and treasure, but devotion to the highest object that can employ the human energies.

“With us no melancholy void,
No moment lingers unemployed,
Or unimproved below ;
Our weariness of life is gone
Who live to serve our God alone,
And only him to know.”

The life of heaven is but the continuation and maturity of Christian life on earth. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life”—hath it as a *present* possession. Grace is glory in the bud, the “earnest of our inheritance.” The elements of our character are the same now that they will be in heaven, and our happiness, too, the same in kind, though not the same in degree.

True, we have our trials ; but we have also our supports. We have our conflicts ; but we have also our triumphs ; and every conquest gained over our spiritual foes becomes to us a new source of gratification and a fresh stimulus to persevering fidelity. Whatever may be our outward allotments, we have

still inward peace, "a peace which the world cannot give nor take away." If happiness can be found anywhere, it must be in such a life—our sins all pardoned, our souls accepted in the Beloved, adopted into the family of heaven, our trials all sanctified, and our course of holy obedience and enjoyment perpetuated for ever!

2. *And what an influence must elevated and consistent piety exert upon the world.* "Ye are," says Jesus, "the light of the world—the salt of the earth." The influence of an eminently pious man has sometimes pervaded a whole neighborhood. We can hardly come in contact with such a man without being impressed with his superior worth. One intimately acquainted with that faithful servant of Christ, Harlan Page, says, "I have well considered the assertion when I say, that during nine years, in which we were associated in labors, I do not know that I ever passed an interview with him, long enough to have any interchange of thought and feeling, in which I did not receive from him an impulse heavenward, an impulse onward in duty to God and the souls of men." What, then, would be the effect were all who name the name of Christ to breathe the same spirit!

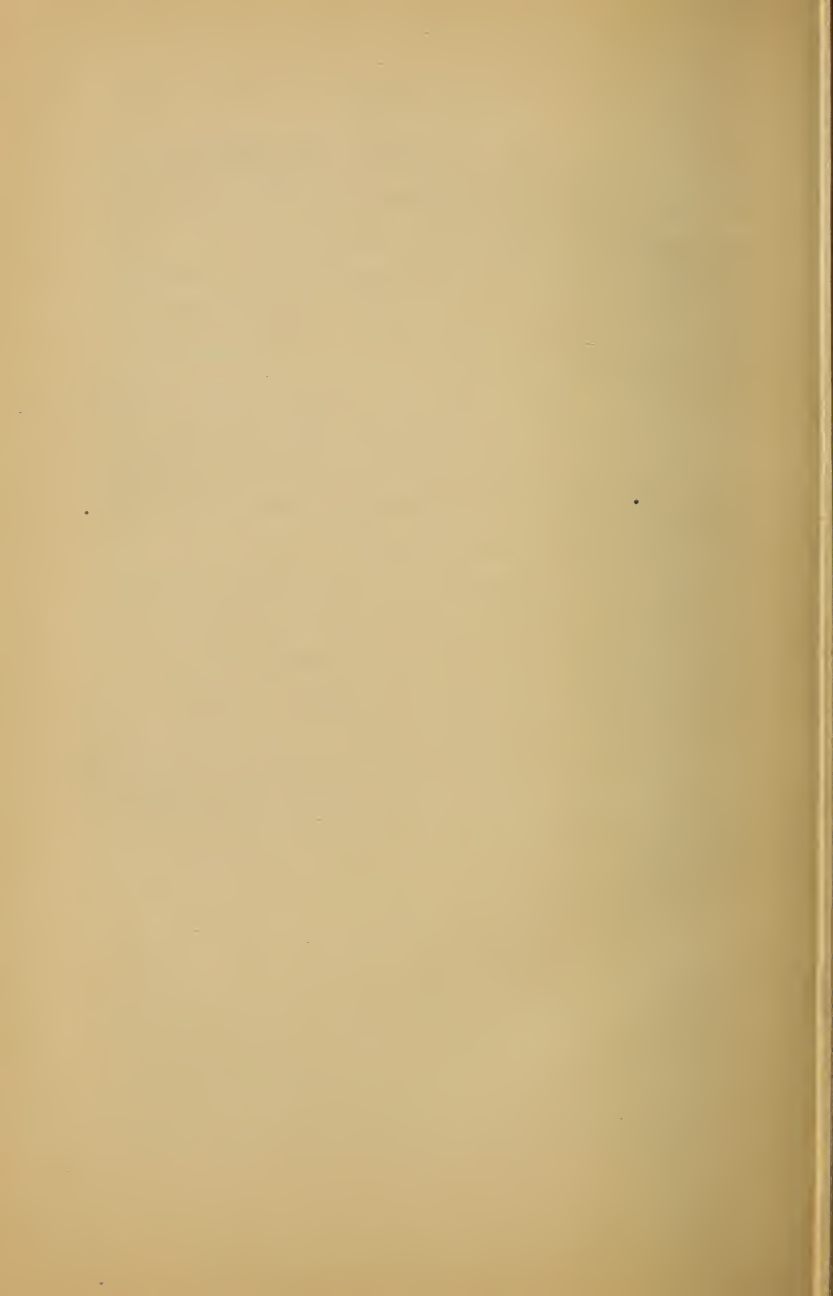
Oh, for a holy church, a church "the habitation

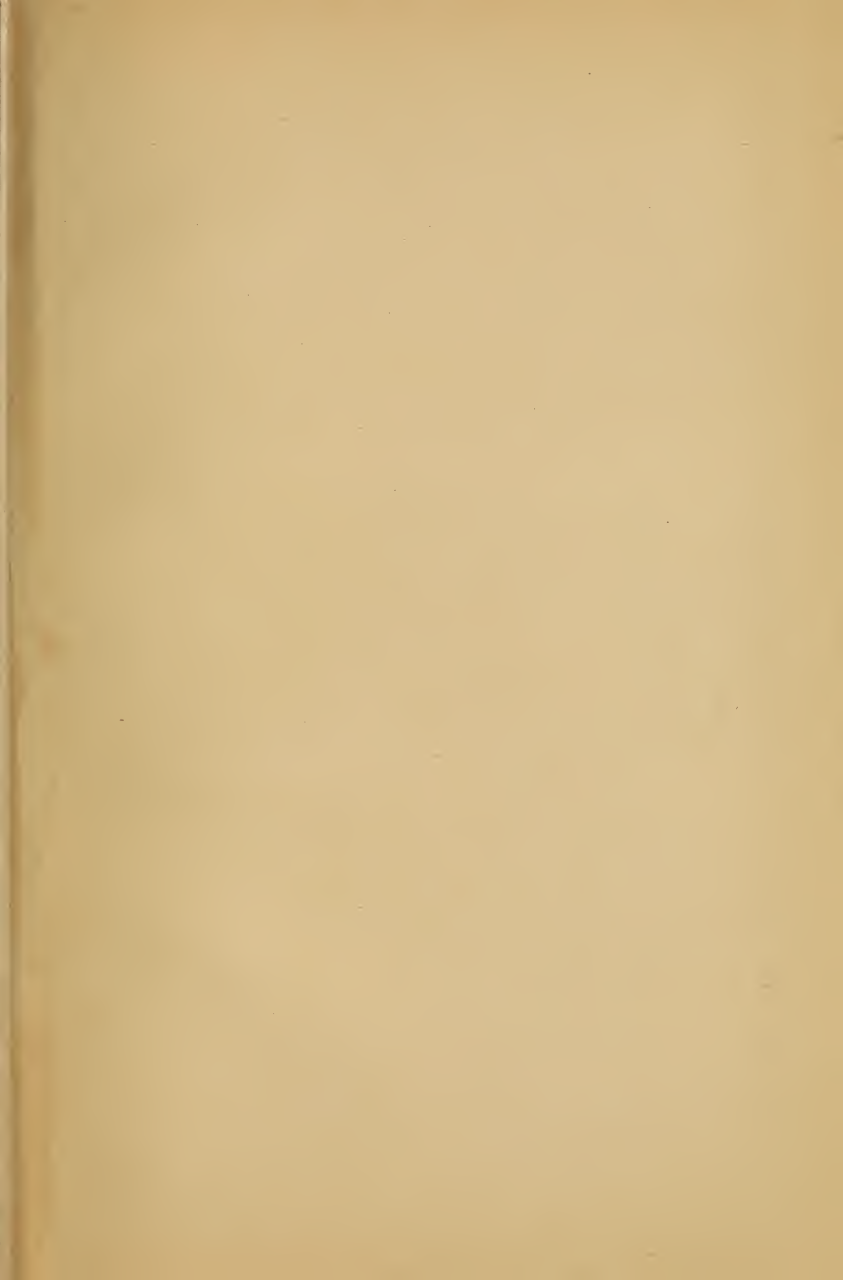
of God through the Spirit." This, more than anything else, is what is needed for the world's conversion. We need more ardent love to Christ, more compassion for perishing souls, more vigorous faith, and more entire consecration to the glory of God. With such an elevated standard of piety there would be men enough and money enough, and "power with God" enough, speedily to usher in the glorious era when all flesh shall see the salvation of God. "The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself." He will honor those who honor him. Holy men are needed to promote holiness. "Awake, awake ; put on thy strength, O Zion ; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem." "Arise ; shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Let our motto be, *Onward and still onward, higher and still higher, satisfied with nothing short* of "all the fulness of God," with joyful expectation looking forward to the time when we shall be presented before the throne "without a spot or blemish or any such thing."

It may be that this small volume will fall into the hands of some who are yet "aliens from God and strangers to grace." Hitherto you have lived, not for God, but for the world and self. "The God in whose hands thy breath is, and whose are all thy

ways, thou hast not glorified." Oh, what a blank the *past* ! What a review for a death-bed—a wasted life, perverted powers, goodness abused, provision made for the body, but none for the soul ; treasure laid up for earth, but none for heaven ; the great end of existence unattained ! And then the *future*—how dark ! What you are in time you remain through eternity. "He that is filthy shall be filthy still ;" no redemption beyond the grave, no more sacrifice for sin, no interceding Saviour, no pleading Spirit, no heaven, no hope !

Oh, "be wise to-day, 't is madness to defer." The fountain for sin and uncleanness is still open and accessible ; salvation, purchased at the price of precious blood, is freely tendered, and you have only to accept it on the simple condition of faith, and you enter upon a new existence, a career of holiness, usefulness, and happiness, that will know no end.







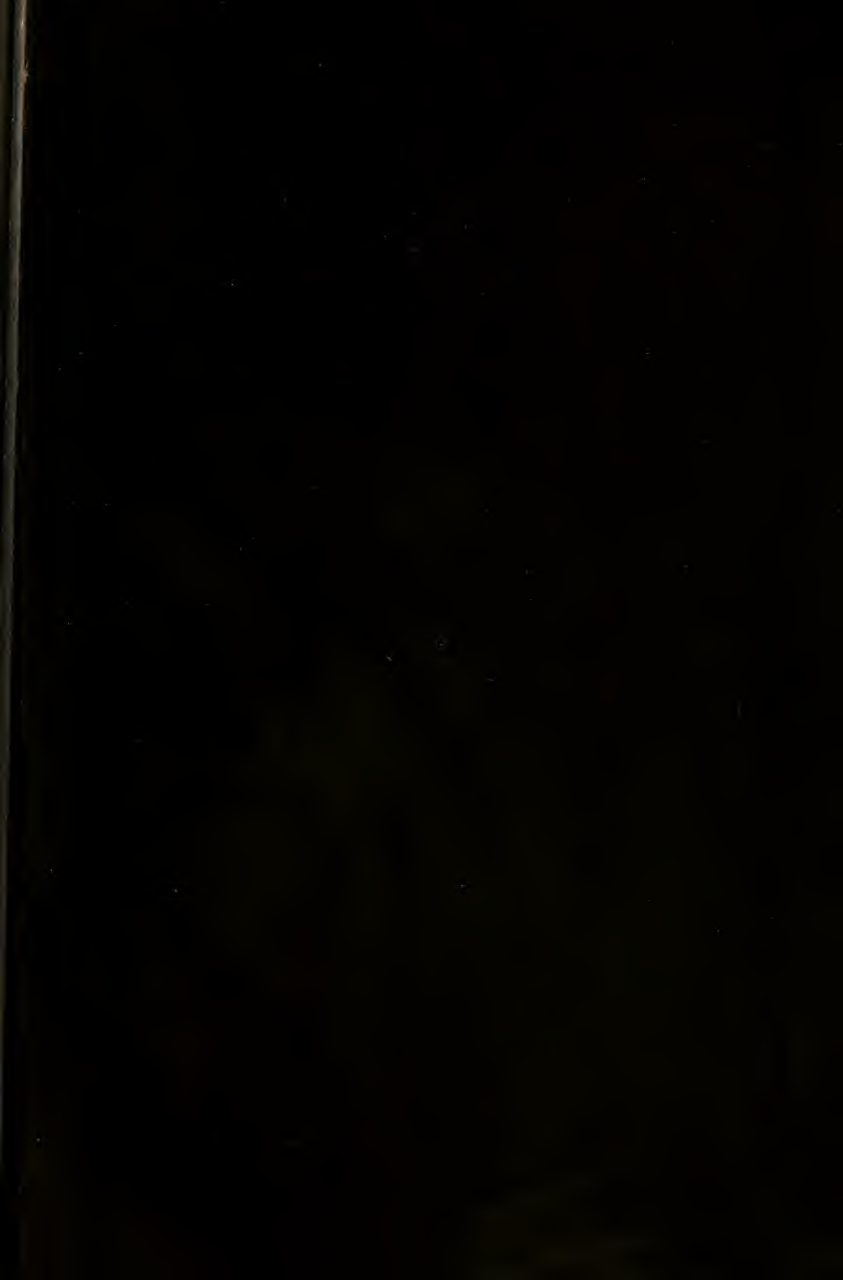
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